

S E R M O N

Preached before the

HOUSE OF LORDS,

IN THE

Abbey Church of Westminster,

On WEDNESDAY, *June II.* 1746.

Being the Day of

HIS MAJESTY'S HAPPY ACCESSION
TO THE THRONE.

By *Hutton* MATTHEW, Lord Bishop of BANGOR.



L O N D O N:

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M.DCC.XLVI.

Die Jovis 12 Junii, 1746.

ORDER'D by the Lords Spiritual and Temporal in Parliament assembled, That the Thanks of this House be and they are hereby given to the Lord Bishop of *Bangor*, for the Sermon by Him preached before this House Yesterday, in the Abbey-Church, *Westminster*; And He is hereby desired to cause the same to be printed and published.

ASHLEY COWPER,
Cler' Parliamentor'



JOSHUA I. 7.

Only be thou strong, and very courageous, that thou mayst observe to do according to all the Law, which Moses my Servant commanded thee: Turn not from it to the right Hand or to the left, that thou mayst prosper whithersoever thou goest.

WHATEVER Impropriety there may be in applying to ourselves the special Promises of G O D, limited to the distinct Observance of the Ritual or Municipal Law of the *Jews*; in general Cases of universal Concern to Mankind; in Matters of Government similar or parallel to those under the *Jewish* Oeconomy; we certainly may, and ought to rest upon the same good Providence of G O D as they did, for the Success of all our honest and

virtuous Endeavours, to promote the Good and Prosperity of the Community whereto we belong.

FORTITUDE and true Firmness of Spirit are recommended to *Joshua* upon his being appointed Successor to *Moses*, no less than three times in the Compass of the first nine Verses of this Chapter; and that too at a Time when GOD declared himself ready to go along with his People whithersoever they went. And will not the same Fortitude and Firmness of Spirit be the first and principal Virtue requisite in every Conductor of any great and noble Enterprize, as long as the World endures? But as Strength and Courage are apt to degenerate into Vice, and produce very mischievous Effects, when let loose from the Restraints of Justice and Prudence; we find a strict Observance of the Law, without swerving either to the right Hand or to the left, enjoined as a Qualification equally essential to the *Jewish* Leader. And is not the same Qualification equally essential to the Character of every good and virtuous Prince? Is not a strict Adherence to the Laws of Government, established upon the known Maxims of Truth and Justice, the surest Means of deriving the Blessing of Providence upon his Country; of giving Stability to his Government; and Prosperity to his People?

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IN this View of the Words, I shall beg Leave to enlarge upon the Qualifications here given in Charge by G O D himself to *Joshua*; And if upon Nineteen Years Experience, they be found truly to belong to the Good and Gracious KING now reigning over us, we shall have the greatest Reason to rejoice upon this auspicious Day; to return our unfeigned Thanks to Heaven, for committing the Reins of Government to his Hands; and put up our fervent Prayers for the Continuance of a Life so valuable in itself, and of so much Consequence to the Welfare of these Nations.

Be thou strong, and very courageous, that thou mayst observe to do according to all the Law, which Moses my Servant commanded thee.

WHOEVER reflects upon the State of the Children of *Israel*, antecedent to this Period of Time, and considers their History, from their coming out of *Egypt* to the Death of *Moses*; and thereby recollects the strange, perverse, and mutinous Spirit, which generally prevailed amongst them; a Spirit of Revolt and Disobedience, hardly to be restrained by the sensible Appearance, at Times, of G O D himself amongst them; and at others, by inflicting his sore Judgments upon them; must see, that this repeated Injunction of G O D to his Servant *Joshua*, has a peculiar

peculiar Force in it, adapted to the Circumstances of Time wherein it was given. Wherever a Spirit of Sedition, and withdrawing their Obedience from the settled Laws of a Country, prevails among the People; the Courage and Resolution of their Governors must either increase in due Proportion to check it, or every thing will fall immediately into Confusion. It is of the Essence of Sedition, if not checked in Time, to form itself into Rebellion; as it is of Rebellion to overturn Government, whenever the Resolution of those at the Helm slackens, or their Courage fails.

WE have a remarkable Instance of this in the People of *Israel*, *Exod.* Chap. xxxii.

UPON the Absence of *Moses* from them a little longer than their Patience would bear, the People grew mutinous, would have a molten Image set up for the Object of their Worship, instead of the Great G O D of Heaven and Earth; and be pacified with nothing, but forming themselves under the Banner of their Idol, to be conducted back into *Egypt*. *Aaron*, whom *Moses* had deputed to be their Governor during his Absence, had not Resolution to withstand their untractable Spirit: He yielded to their Importunity; the golden Calf was fashioned; the Word given out, *These are thy Gods, O Israel*: and the People
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in Danger, after all the great Things GOD had done for them, after many repeated Promises of forming them into a flourishing Commonwealth in a Land flowing with Milk and Honey, in Danger of returning to their *Egyptian* Idolatry and Bondage.

JOSHUA was along with *Moses*, when he first became an Eye-witness of this wicked Revolt: He saw the Constancy and Courage of that great Leader, in vindicating the Laws of GOD and of *Israel*; and at that Time, probably, laid the Foundation of the Character, which advanced him to be the Successor of *Moses* in the Government. And no sooner was he appointed to succeed, but we find those heroic Qualities, which had shone so conspicuously in *Moses* upon that Occasion, made the Basis of the Prosperity he was to hope for in the Conducting of that People: So that the Command of GOD being added to the Experience of the good Effects he had seen of these Virtues, *Joshua* might be inexcusable, if his Heart had ever failed him in the Enterprize (arduous and perilous as it was) upon which GOD thought fit to employ him. But he was true to his GOD and to his Trust: His Courage and Constancy made all Opposition fall before him, till by a steady Pursuit of the Means directed, he accomplished the End of
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Providence, in putting the *Israelites* in Possession of the promised Land.

Now altho' we should allow a Perverseness of Temper to the People of *Israel*, as peculiar to them, as every other Circumstance of their History; yet, who that reflects upon the general Turn of Mens Minds, and the Difficulty of keeping Individuals, much more any Number of Men, steady in the Pursuit of their own true and real Interest, by Means they have not been used to, or not of their own choosing, does not see that an invincible Constancy of Mind in those who have the Lead, is necessary to achieve any great and laudable Undertaking; nay, very frequently, even to restrain them from sinking into an abject State of Servitude and Superstition?— A certain Levity, or Impetuosity of Temper, in the Generality of Men, during their youthful Years; Habits of Indolence or Pleasure in some, as they advance in Age; and too eager an Attention to their seeming Interest in others, are apt to give all a very quick Sense of Disappointment in their Pursuits; very often to defeat what they most ardently wish: and from a Want of due Perseverance in the Use of right Means, as well as from changing for those which are wrong, fail of their End, when they are just arrived within the Sight of it. Hardly any one who
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recollects the most material Occurrences of his own Life, but will, I am persuaded, find this Observation verified in some Instances, to his Regret and Sorrow. Happy the Man whose Courage and Constancy have preserved his Will from being whiffled about by every Gust of Passion; his Resolution to do Right from being shaken by any Train of Disappointments!

AND if such be the State of Individuals, in pursuing their own private Happiness; what must we imagine to be the Case of those, who have the Happiness of Societies of Men for the Object of their Care? A Number of restless and inconstant Spirits to restrain within the Bounds of Duty, for the Preservation and Welfare of the Whole? How great must be the Strength of Mind that is equal to such a Task? The Courage sufficient to withhold the Violence of a Multitude prone to do Evil?

FOR besides the Inconveniencies arising from Levity of Temper in particular Men; Governors have to deal with all the Folly of mistaken Zealots, and all the Malice of wild Resentment, and boundless Ambition. And as on the one Hand it is not always in their Power, for want of Leisure, or want of Attention, in the Bulk of the inferior Ranks of Mankind, to discover how their own particular Interests are knit together, and

interwoven with the Interest of the Whole; and that it must often happen on the other, that there shall be an apparent clashing of private Advantage with the public Good, there must be always a Way open to work up the best intentioned Minds into a Persuasion of Male Practice in Government; an Inlet to turn the Jealousies of the Weak into Murmuring and Discontent; and give the Factious an Opportunity of setting all Authority at Defiance, till they can gather Strength to break out into open Rebellion. Resolution therefore, and Courage to withstand all the Malevolence of evil-minded Men, to bear up against the concealed Machinations of secret Foes, and repress the audacious Attempts of the open Violators of public Peace; must always be the first and most essential Qualification of those, to whom the executive Part of Government is committed. Without it, the best framed Laws lose all their Force and Vigor; and the wisest Counsels cannot prosper.

THERE is no Occasion to go deep into History, to illustrate these Truths: The Jewish is far from being the only one, that bears Testimony to them. The Stories of every Age, and every civilized Country, do the same; and not any one more amply, than the History of our own. I mean not to enter into any long Detail
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of Matters, better known to most of You than myself; or to confirm what has hitherto been observed, by any Instances of Pusillanimity, Irresolution, or Levity, in Princes of our own. — I would only observe in this Place, that had not a most intrepid Courage and Constancy of Mind, been the Characteristick of the glorious King WILLIAM; the Deliverance He came to work for us, could never have taken place: nor the happy Consequences of it been felt at this Day, in the free Enjoyment of our Religion, Lives and Property; had not the same Constancy and Fortitude justly distinguished the Princes upon whom the Succession to the Crown was established, our present Sovereign, and His Royal Father.

I WOULD not be understood to pass over the Memory of an excellent Queen, as if I thought her Share of Merit in preserving the Establishment upon its legal Basis, unworthy of Notice. — The Glory of the *British* Arms never shone with greater Lustre, than in the Reign of that Princess; and the Successes wherewith they were crowned, while she steadily pursued the common Cause, in Conjunction with her Confederates, will justify the drawing a Veil over any Thing that afterwards happened: But as her Reign was never exercised with the same intestine Commotions,

tions, that the Reigns of her Successors have felt, to the immediate Hazard of every Thing dear to us as *Englishmen* and Protestants; her Resolution and Constancy were never put to the same Trial, nor the Effects of them appeared so conspicuous, as those of her Successors have appeared.

WHAT would have become of our Laws, our Religion, and Liberty, we so justly value, if the late King had been either discouraged by Faction, or terrified by a most daring and wicked Rebellion, from pursuing the diabolical Abettors of it with his just Indignation and Vengeance? And to what other Cause, under G O D, may we so justly impute the pleasing Prospect now rising upon us, of being freed from intestine Troubles, and the desperate Ruin threaten'd to these Kingdoms by a rebellious Crew of Miscreants, under the Conduct of the Popish Son, of a Popish abjured Pretender, as to the known Resolution and Firmness of our present Sovereign? who no sooner heard of the Danger, than He hasten'd over to his Royal Station, to stem the Torrent; has ever shewn a Readiness personally to face Danger, when the Circumstances of Time and Place required it; and demonstrated the Constancy of his Love to his People, by allowing it to take Place of the tender and natural Affection

Affection of a Parent; and sending a most gallant young Prince to make Proof, by his Courage and Conduct, from whom He is descended. Thanks to the great and good GOD of Heaven and Earth, He has thus far prospered him whithersoever he went!

BUT I pass on to the other Part of my Subject; to the Consideration of that Justice, or Observance of all the Law, which is necessary to give the Lustre to true Courage or Fortitude, and heighten it into that sublime Virtue in Government, from whence alone Prosperity to any People will hardly ever fail of being derived.

AND here it may not be amiss, in the first Place, to observe, that as GOD, in forming the Commonwealth of *Israel*, made the true Worship of Himself, and the Observance of the Moral Law, the chief Foundation of all the Success, of all the National Prosperity that People was to expect; so will it always be the true Foundation upon which every free and legal Government must be built. The same Foundation of GOD will for ever *stand sure*, with respect to Communities, as well as to private Persons: GOD will always know them that be his; and require every one that nameth the Name of Christ to depart from Iniquity.

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THE Injunction, indeed, to the *Jewish* Leader, extends equally to all the Law, to the Ritual and Judicial, as well as to the Moral. But as those were nothing more than temporary Regulations, of Matters in their own Nature indifferent; to guard the People against the superstitious Practices of Idolators, and preserve a Decency in the Form of their own Worship: Or for the Administration of Justice and Judgment, according to the Circumstances of that particular People, distinguished from every other Nation upon Earth: All the Relation they can be understood to have to any other People, must be in the Way of Accommodation; to shew, in similar Cases, the Respect and Obedience that is due to Laws made merely for the Preservation of Order, and answering the various Exigencies of Government, as they arise. There is a Reverence due to the Political Laws of this kind, made by competent Authority, for the public Benefit of every other Country, as well as to those of *Judea*: neither will Governors ever be able to maintain their own Authority, or uniformly promote the Interest and Peace of the Subjects, without a steady Attention to the due Execution of them. Making good Laws, without looking to the regular Observance of them, is the ready Way to bring all Authority under Contempt; and

and where Authority ceases, Disorders will follow, and very often make the Use of Violence necessary to supply the Defect: Whence arises the Danger of a legal Government's degenerating into Tyranny on the one Hand; as of its being overrun on the other by popular Discord and Tumult. Very justly therefore may we apply this emphatical Command of GOD, to every just Prince, who desires to rule his People in Righteousness and Truth. *Be thou strong, and very courageous, that thou mayst observe to do according to all the Law, which Moses my Servant commanded thee.*

How well the constitutional Laws of this Country are calculated to answer the same good Purposes with the Laws of Moses, to secure the pure Worship of GOD in Spirit and in Truth, against the Inroads of Superstition and Idolatry; and to guard the Crown on one Hand from any Abridgment of its just Prerogatives; the People on the other, from any Invasion of their undoubted Rights: let the Laws of GOD and of the Land speak for themselves. The Scriptures are free for every one to peruse, and judge of the Duty he owes to the supreme Being, to his Neighbour, and himself. The Municipal Laws are open to all, to understand for themselves, the reciprocal Duties, which are due from the People

ple to the Prince; from the Prince to the People; and from Man to Man, as they stand united in one common Society. And altho' we are not under the strict Command of *laying up these Laws in our Heart and in our Soul; of binding them for a Sign upon our Hand, that they be as Frontlets between our Eyes;* yet would it be a very useful Lesson, and a very reputable too, to teach them our Children, speaking of them when we sit in the House, when we walk by the Way, when we lie down, and when we rise up, Deut. xi. 18, 19. It is a Knowledge of so interesting a Nature, as to make it worth the Pains of every Man of Leisure and Capacity to look into it; and so easy, as to the main Points of Practice, that there are very few but what may have an Opportunity to know them and do them. Ignorance therefore on the Subject's Part, can never be a just Excuse to cloak their Disobedience, or palliate the Guilt of their Rebellion.

—AGAIN; How inviolably our Princes, even down from the Time of the happy Revolution, have contained themselves within the Limits of their own just Authority; endeavoured to maintain the Peoples Rights, religious and civil, by a strict Adherence to the settled Laws of our Country, or an equitable Interposition of Mercy, in Cases wherever Mercy has been due; the History

tory of that Period of Time, the Memory of Numbers of our Fellow-Citizens, will at this Day testify beyond all Contradiction. May I not challenge the most determined Enemy of the Revolution, (if such an Enemy is to be found in these Kingdoms at this Day) to shew me any one Act of Oppression, one single Attempt by the Exertion of unwarrantable Power on the Part of the Crown, to invade the Rights of the meanest Subject, from the Time that glorious Event took place? Has it not rather been the constant Language from the Throne, Make yourselves easy, and we shall be happy?

BUT to bring home the Argument to the Solemnity of this Day. Our gracious Sovereign is now entering upon the Twentieth Year of his Reign: may the great Author of Health and Life add many prosperous Years unto it! whilst the Love of Truth and Justice, and a firm Attachment to the Laws of the Realm, continue to be the Rule of his Actions; the Measure of his mild, auspicious Government! For, may I not ask with Confidence, Have any other Principles from the Moment he became our King, ever biassed his Judgment, or influenced his Will? Has He not been invariably steady in *observing to do according to all the Law, turning not from it either to the right Hand or to the Left?*

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WHILEST the Blessings of Peace smiled gayly upon the Land, was there ever the least Attempt to interrupt our Enjoyments of them; of our Religion, our Liberty, our Estates, our Commerce, or the more retired Pleasure of domestick Quiet and Comforts? Did not every one dwell secure *under his own Vine and under his own Fig-tree*? Was there ever so much as room for a Surmise of any despotic Act of Violence, or illegal Imposition falling upon the Subjects; or any undue Interruption to the regular Course of Law? And since it has been our Lot to be involved in a just and necessary War; has not the sincere Regard of His Majesty to his injured People, as well as to the common Liberties of *Europe*, been as conspicuous to all the World, as his Courage and Bravery were before? There is not any one who hears me, but can from his own Experience answer, True. And how then, in the Name of Goodness, has it happened, at a Time when every *Briton*, capable of bearing Arms, might rather be expected to take a Share in the Service of his Country, against the Incroachments of foreign Ambition and Tyranny, that some Thousands of Subjects, in despite to their Prince's Goodness, in Defiance of all the Laws in being, uninjured and unprovoked, have made the most insolent Attack against our Laws
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and Government, the most atrocious Attempt upon the Lives, the Liberties, and Happiness of their Fellow-Subjects, that ever was contrived? Is it possible for any who call themselves *Britons*, to desert the Cause of Liberty and Truth? Can the Spirit of our Countrymen ever sink so low, as to be *again entangled in the Yoke of Bondage*; to crouch before the Footstool of a Pope for their Religion, and surrender up their Reason and Judgment to the usurped Pretensions of the infallible Chair? or to exchange all the Blessings of a free and legal Government, for the bitter Fruits of uncontrolable Will and arbitrary Sway?

I CANNOT persuade myself, that one single sincere Protestant, can be either so ungrateful to the King, as to entertain in the most secret Windings of his Heart, even a Wish to the Prejudice of his Person; or so cruel to his Fellow-Subjects, as to lend a Hand towards the Introduction of inevitable Ruin to his Country: Nay, we are warranted to believe, from the uncommon Zeal and Unanimity which appeared upon this trying Occasion, that there still remains a Warmth of Affection to our Laws, and of Gratitude to the Guardian of them, sufficient to damp the Hopes of our most inveterate Enemies: And I trust, under GOD, there will always be a Sufficiency of Strength and Courage, to chastise

their Insolence, and repel their most audacious Attempts; so long as both Prince and People unite in making the Law of their Country the Measure of their Actions, and inviolably observe their mutual Engagements.

BUT let not our Trust of this kind betray us into any false Security; or divert our Attention from providing for our future Safety.

WE know that so long as there are Numbers of Papists in this Land, unless their complexional Virtues get the better of their religious Persuasion, there must be Numbers, who wish in their Hearts the Destruction of our Constitution in Church and State. We know that most of their Men of Fortune are brought up in foreign Seminaries, tinctured with Jesuitical Policy; and I may venture to say, All attach'd to the Interest of a Pretender to His Majesty's Crown. Mistake me not, as if I meant to stir up a Persecution against them. Whilst they keep themselves quiet, and their Religion to themselves, let them have the Protection of the Law to their Estates and Persons. If they will give the Security to the Government required by the Acts of Toleration, let them enjoy the Fooleries of their Pagan Worship. But so long as they adopt for Tenets of Religion, Matters of mere civil and political Consideration; and their Head claims a
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Supremacy over all the Potentates upon Earth, even to dispense with every Obligation human and divine, that interferes with their usurped Jurisdiction over the Temporalities of Princes, and Consciences of their Subjects: so long will it be prudent to restrain their Religion from stalking openly through our Streets; so long will it be an uncontestable Maxim of Self-preservation, to put every Thing in ure, to lessen the Numbers professing a Religion so dangerous to the Liberties of Mankind.

UPON Maxims of this sort, the Succession of the Crown in a Protestant Line was projected and built. We have lived to see the Structure perfected, and enjoyed by Princes, who have answered the most sanguine Hopes of the first Projectors: We are here met to commemorate the Accession of One, who by the whole Tenor of his Actions has given Proof, that if we sustain any Loss of our Religion and Liberties, it will not be from Him, but from ourselves: And ought not this Consideration then to rouse us up to an Enquiry, whether we are worthy of our Religion, and have as tender a Regard for our Liberties, as hath been all along shewn by our King? It is essential to true Religion, that the Professors of it should think, and judge, and act for themselves: It is of the Essence of free Government, that the Subject, as well as the Prince, should be
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steady in observing to do according to all the Law. Religion, otherwise, is no better than blind Faith, or implicit Obedience; and Loyalty will become very precarious, if left solely to the Direction of inconstant Humour and Will. Let us enquire therefore, by Way of Application, how well our own Conduct has corresponded with that of our Prince, that we may endeavour to merit at the Hands of G O D the Continuance of those Blessings of Government we have so long enjoyed.

WE value ourselves upon the Truth and Excellency of our holy Religion, upon the pure Simplicity of our Way of Worship. But does our Conduct and Morals correspond with this Truth? our Zeal for this Way of Worship, discover itself by a regular Attendance upon it? We boast of the Freedom of our Constitution and Government; but do we never abuse that Freedom, or violate the settled Laws of it? We are apt to talk of our Laws for restraining of Vice; for encouraging the Fear of G O D; and value our Privilege of a Share in making those Laws: But is Vice ever the more restrained by them? Does the Fear of G O D discover itself more openly in our Streets? or a Strictness in observing good Laws accompany the Privilege of making them? It is in vain to hope for any good Effects from the best Religion, or from the wisest Laws to
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establish the Profession of it, till Men will be serious and sincere in conforming their Actions to that Profession; firm and steady in observing what is enacted. If the Vogue and Fashion of the World are to dispense with an Exactness in doing our Duty to GOD, and excuse a general Connivance at the Violation of any good Law, it is impossible to say where the Mischief will stop. The same Fashion will cause a very easy Transition from a want of Exactness, to careless Neglect, and from Neglect to a Contempt of what is right: Or make a general Connivance equivalent to the Law's being obsolete. Neither will the Care and Vigilance of the best Magistrate avail much to prevent it.

ARE we desirous therefore of seeing a real Reformation of Religion and Morals, suitable to the Plan marked out by the Laws of our Country, we must every one in his Rank and Station contribute a Share to the good Work; and concur with the Magistrate in carrying it on to Perfection. For whilst our Actions give the Lie to our Belief, and our Deeds discountenance the true Intention of the Law, we can neither hope for the Favour and Blessing of GOD upon our Religion, or rely on the best Laws to preserve our Constitution. Neither Wisdom in the Form of our Government, nor the Excellency of our Laws, nor the Justice and Clemency of our Prince,

Prince, will secure the Peace and Prosperity of our Country against the constant Strivings of a gainfaying People; any more than the Knowledge of the Christian Religion will save those, who disclaim any Obedience to the Gospel.

LET us set a true Value therefore upon our Religion; but let the Light of it shine out in a due Influence upon our Lives. Let our Hearts be possessed with the highest Esteem and Reverence for the Form of our Civil Government; but let that Reverence appear by our Endeavours to observe the Laws of it. Let a sincere Love of Truth be the Basis of our religious, and the Good of our Country the Test of our political Conduct. And let the Example of our KING invite us to be strong and very courageous, *in observing to do according to all the Law*: By this means, our Obedience to Him will become uniform, and our Gratitude irreproachable; and by this means shall we be enabled to come boldly to the Throne of Grace, to offer up our Prayers for His Majesty and all his Royal Family; That the same good Providence, which has hitherto prospered them, may continue to be their Shield, and Buckler, and Rock of Defense against all their Enemies: and the Blessings of true Religion and Liberty be derived down to our latest Posterity, under the Protection of a Prince of his illustrious House.

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